



A SERMON

Preached in Christ Church Cathedral,

22ND NOVEMBER, 1868,

AFTER

FIFTY YEARS' INCUMBENCY OF THE PARISH OF MONTREAL,

BY

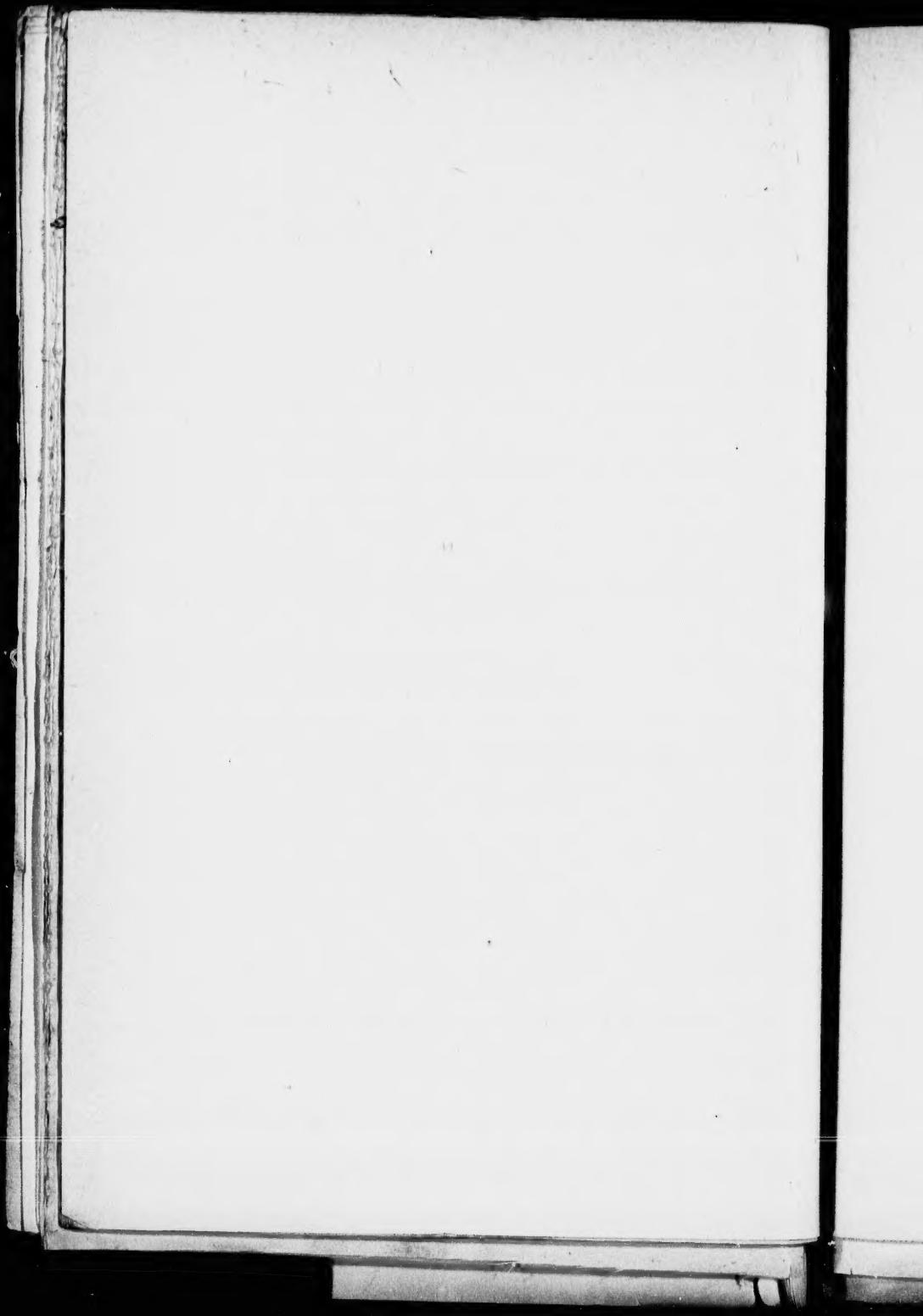
**THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF MONTREAL,
AS RECTOR;**

And Dedicated to the

CONGREGATION OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL.

Montreal:

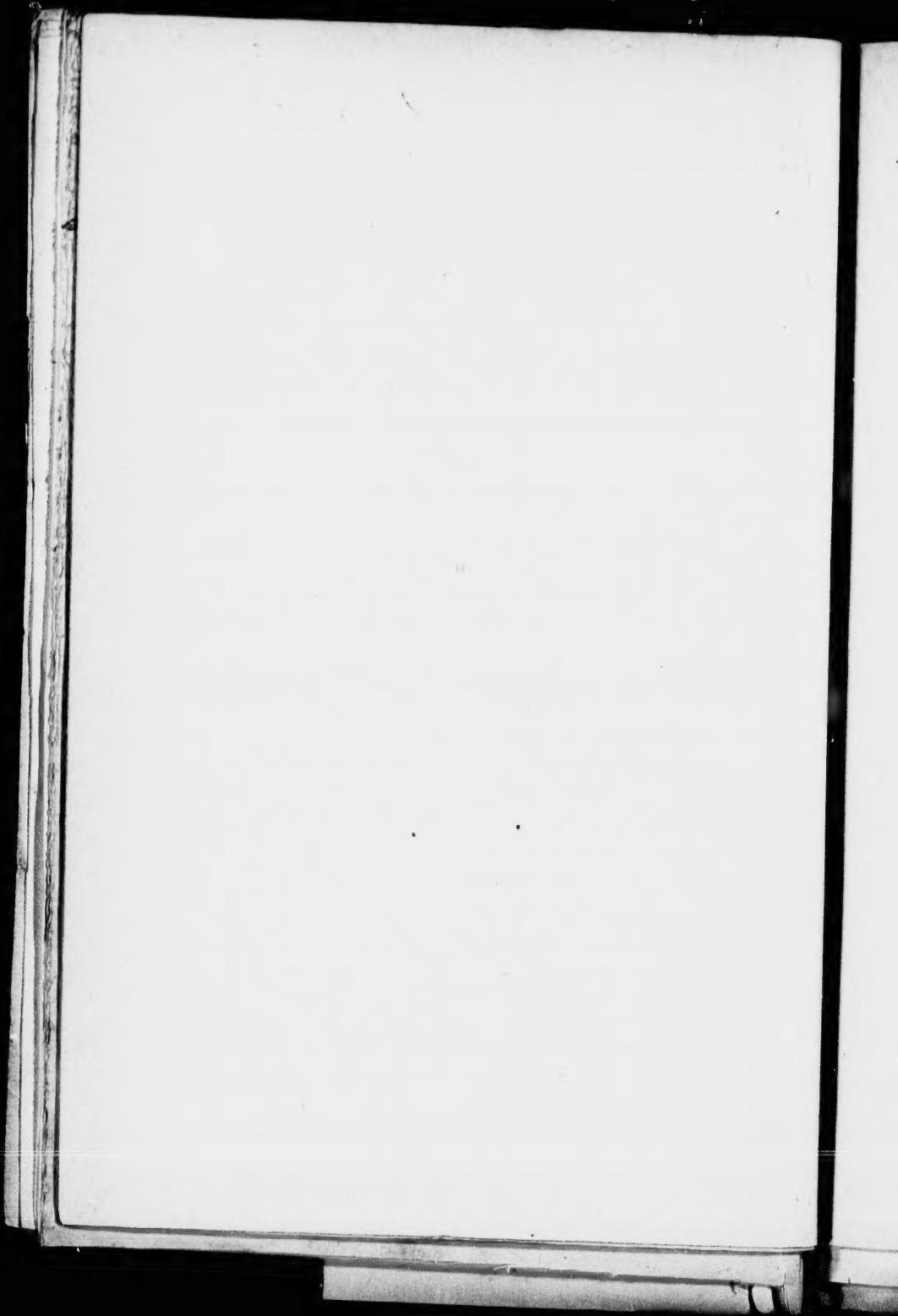
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1868.



PREFACE.

TO THE CONGREGATION OF CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL,
Dearly Beloved,

I regret very much that I was not able to preach the Sermon, but considering that I am in the 55th year of my Ministry, and in the 78th of my age, I am persuaded that this circumstance will create in you feelings of sympathy rather than of disappointment.



A SERMON.

ACTS XX. 27.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

IT is now 50 years since I preached my first sermon, as Rector of this Parish. In all that long period of half a century I have never spoken of myself from the pulpit, but now I deem it fitting to say of myself, in the words of my text : “ I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.” This, at least, has been my constant and earnest endeavour. I may have failed to do so effectually, but I trust my teaching from this place has not been without its fruit in the salvation of souls. My present object is to place before you, as plainly and briefly as possible, what is the whole counsel of God, with reference to the salvation of man, plainly and briefly, that it may be easily understood and remembered ; and if you cherish in your hearts this remembrance of me, it will be the best memorial of me, especially as far as you are concerned.

I begin with the creation and fall of man. “ God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity.” “ God made

man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions." From the state of innocence and immortality man fell. "And unto Adam God said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." This was the doom of Adam; but what of his posterity? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." "In Adam all die." "It is appointed unto men once to die." "All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Such is the doom of all Adam's posterity, of all mankind. But what is the consolation? Altho' "death shall feed on them and their beauty shall consume in the grave, yet will God redeem my soul from the power of the grave; therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth—my flesh also shall rest in hope;" for "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." "I am the resurrection and the life (said the Saviour of the world); he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Such is the

doom of man and such his consolation. But alas! there is a bar in the way of the full enjoyment of that consolation. "No man living is without sin. If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." None are pure in the sight of God, and no unclean thing shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." But for all this the infinite mercy of God hath provided a remedy which is open to all who earnestly seek it. "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him should not perish, but have eternal life." "This is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins."

This is the remedy, but it is not unconditional—repentance must go before forgiveness of sin. The Prophet Isaiah thus exhorts the Jews, after reprobating them for their disobedience: "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well"—and then he farther says: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"Repent (said the Saviour) and believe the Gospel." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The apostles say, "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out"— "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sin ;" and finally, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin." These are good and consolatory words. No passage of Scripture is more full of joy and consolation to weak, erring, frail, and fallen man than this, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleaveth from all sin." But let us not be carried away with erroneous notions of its efficacy, for consoling as it is, mistaken ideas of it may be fatal. To the humble and steady Christian it is sweet and encouraging, shedding around the path of his weary pilgrimage the brightest visions of glory, and filling his heart with that holy calm and peace of God which passeth all understanding ; and to the wanderer who is anxious to return to the fold from whence he has strayed, it holds out the sure and certain promise of restoration. But to the hardened and impenitent sinner it can have no other effect, so long as he continues in his impenitence, than to aggravate his guilt and seal his condemnation. The promise follows the declaration of the necessity of "walking in the light" and thus having fellowship with "the Father and with his son, Jesus Christ;" the necessity of endeavouring to be holy even as He

is holy ; of continually striving to regulate our lives and conversation by the light of His gospel, before the Father's blessing can be bestowed upon us through the blood of Christ. " This, then (says the apostle,) is the message which we have heard of him and declare unto you that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness we lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin." And as if he had foreseen that some would attempt to found on this declaration the false doctrine of a state of sinless perfection in this life, or of being freed from the *power* as well as the *guilt* of sin, the apostle follows up his declaration by this other declaration : " If we say that we have *no sin* we *deceive* ourselves and the truth is not in us," and then he immediately declares the condition on which the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin ; " If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to *forgive* us our sins, and to *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness." Indeed, the very expression of cleansing from sin necessarily implies the existence of sin, since none can be cleansed who are not polluted ; none can be said to be cleansed who need no cleansing.

And with regard to that other doctrine, that the meritorious efficacy of the passion and death of Christ so cleanses and purifies *our nature*, that we

afterwards live a holy and purely righteous, sinless life, it is obvious that the apostle is speaking, not of those who walk in darkness, and have consequently no fellowship with God, but of those who walk in the light and have that fellowship ; and it is of *such* that he says : " The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanseth us from all sin ; " from that original sin which (as our 9th Article expresses it) " is the fault and corruption of the *nature* of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, and therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation." But it also cleanseth from our own sins, " for all (as the 15th Article says,) although baptized and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things." " After we have received the Holy Ghost (says the 16th Article,) we may depart from grace given and fall into sin, and by the grace of God we *may* rise again and amend our lives ; and therefore they are to be condemned which say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent." In Baptism, the laver of regeneration, we are cleansed by the blood of Christ from original sin. In our Baptismal service we pray that the infant about to be baptized may *receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.* Infants can have no sins of their own ; it is consequently for the remission of original sin that we pray, and this is in accordance with the directions contained in the Holy Scriptures—" Pray one for another," " Re-

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pent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, *for the remission of sins* ;" " According to his mercy he saved us *by the washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

That we have no assurance of the benefit of the atonement, unless we strive to obey the precepts of the Gospel, is acknowledged by all Christians. But with respect to the ordinances the case is different —some considering them as mere filthy rags, and others looking upon them either as things indifferent, or as things which they are bound to observe, but having nothing to do with our salvation. But *we* have not *so* learned Christ. We receive the Gospel dispensation as a whole plan of salvation, no part of which can be neglected without endangering our salvation. By the ordinance of Baptism we are admitted into the Church of Christ; we thus become members of his body; we thus, and by no other possible means, enter into that covenant with God in which *alone* we have the promise of his covenanted mercies, the cleansing us from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, his son. In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, we are commanded to observe it in remembrance of him through whom alone we can hope to be saved. This divine command, as binding upon our consciences as any one of the decalogue, cannot be transgressed with impunity. Living in the habitual neglect of it cannot be consistent with any hope of salvation. We cannot be safe in the neglect of it, considered merely as a commemoration of Christ's death. But there is

another point of view in which it must also be considered as necessary to salvation, on account of the benefits which we receive thereby. Jesus Christ himself has emphatically declared, " Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." Who then that is conscious of his need of being cleansed from his sins by the blood of Christ will neglect the observance of that holy ordinance, in which this cleansing from sin is so emphatically promised, with the partaking of which the promise of eternal life is so plainly connected. This is the blessing which Christ shed his blood to purchase—the pearl of great price which he has purchased for all mankind, and which he offers freely to *all*, but which will eventually be enjoyed by *none* but those who embrace him by faith in his blood, and who shew forth that faith by observing all his commandments, especially the last and greatest of all.

Let us, then, place our sure and certain confidence in him, undoubtingly believing that God the Father, who spared not his Son, but gave him for us, will with him also give us all things necessary for our salvation—that God the Son, who hath redeemed us by his cross, will never leave nor forsake his faithful followers—and that God the Holy Ghost will continue to sanctify those whom he hath regenerated at their baptism, and constantly strengthen them with his assisting grace—pro-

vided they grieve Him not with their sins nor resist them through the hardness of their hearts,—until they be finally admitted into the Kingdom of Glory.

And now, in conclusion, I desire to set before you that snare of Satan, that you may avoid it, which he has spread before the nations of the world—"the evil heart of unbelief." At no time has it been more prevalent than at the present. Are there not many who would be deeply offended were they charged with infidelity and unbelief, but who treat all those ordinances which Christ and his Apostles have appointed as the peculiar means of expressing our belief and our gratitude and our love to God for his inestimable love in the redemption of our souls,—for the means of grace here and the hope of glory hereafter which He hath given us, and for strengthening our belief and refreshing our souls,—securing to us all the benefits which should flow from a pure and undoubting faith,—Why do such persons, while they assume the name of Christian, and even glory in the name, manifest in almost their whole conduct, if not a total disregard, at least a cold, hesitating, doubting and indifferent attention to the *distinguishing characteristics* of Christianity, by preferring before the performance of the duties which it prescribes and commands, an almost entire devotion to the things which it condemns? Why is it that while they profess to acknowledge its various obligations, they have no serious intention of ever submitting

to its control, or if they *have*, have never been able to carry their intentions into effect; and while they readily acknowledge their incapacity, of themselves, to perform the various duties enjoined by the religion which they profess, without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, they do not seek for that assistance? Were there not an "evil heart of unbelief" concealed, perhaps, from themselves, such inconsistency must be incredible. Lastly, are there not many who profess to believe that God is *love*; that from this pure fountain the stream of salvation flows, and that all weary and thirsty pilgrims are invited to come and drink of its waters, are yet content to slake their thirst at any other fountain rather than this; are unmindful of the invitation, and consequently of the terms and conditions on which it is made. It must be "because of their unbelief;" there must be some secret lurking doubt of the truth and efficacy of these things—some misgivings which, tho' ever influencing their minds, they are afraid of even whispering to themselves.

Examine therefore yourselves, Brethren, whether you can discover in yourselves any token or sign of this "evil heart of unbelief." Labour, with all diligence and perseverance, to guard against the attacks of an enemy which always *has*, and always *will*, produce the most fatal consequences to your happiness in time and eternity; all your strivings and all your efforts which do not flow from an undoubting faith must be useless, because they *are*

not, and *cannot* be directed to the things which are the *objects* of faith, and of faith only.

Commending you to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and hoping that when life is ended we may all meet at the right hand of God, saved through the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, is my earnest prayer.